

**Don't** take medicine for longer than instructed on the label.

### Quick Info

Pharmacy phone number:

Doctor's phone number:

**For more information on OTC medicines:**

- Medicines in My Home:** [www.fda.gov/medsinmyhome](http://www.fda.gov/medsinmyhome)
- NCPIE's Be MedWise** [www.bemedwise.org](http://www.bemedwise.org)
- HHS Drug Information:** [www.os.dhhs.gov/drugs/index.shtml#drugs](http://www.os.dhhs.gov/drugs/index.shtml#drugs)
- Drug information in Spanish:** [www.medlineplus.gov/spanish/](http://www.medlineplus.gov/spanish/)
- FDA Kids Homepage:** [www.fda.gov/oc/opacom/kids/](http://www.fda.gov/oc/opacom/kids/)
- FDA Drug Information:** [druginfo@fda.hhs.gov](mailto:druginfo@fda.hhs.gov)  
1-888-INFO-FDA (1-888-463-6332)

**Poison Control 1-800-222-1222**



**U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**  
Food and Drug Administration



## Medicines In My Home

**An educational program  
on the safe use of  
over-the-counter medicines**

[www.fda.gov/medsinmyhome](http://www.fda.gov/medsinmyhome)

## Over-the-Counter Medicines: Always read The label

Over-the-counter (OTC) medicines are the kind you buy without a prescription. You should always speak to your parent or guardian before you use any medicine.

Reading the *Drug Facts* Label on your OTC medicine is an important part of taking care of your health. The label is there to help you, because you don't have a doctor to help you choose the medicine.

### The label tells you:

- what your medicine is for,
- how to use your medicine,
- if a medicine is right for you and your problem.

Here are some safety tips and medicine facts for you and your family.....



*Did you know that anti-perspirants, sunscreens, and some toothpastes and mouthwashes are medicines too?*

## Examples of other problems treated with OTC medicines:

### Diarrhea

**Stomach Upset** (antacids and acid reducers)

**Cigarette addiction** (nicotine gum, lozenge, patch)

**Prevent cavities** (all fluoride toothpastes)

**Prevent skin damage from sun** (all sunscreens)



## Helpful Ideas and Fun Facts

A product is a medicine or drug if it

- changes the way your body works or
- treats or prevents a disease.

### Here are some examples:

- Antiperspirants are drugs. They stop your sweat glands from making sweat. Deodorants are not drugs. They just help you smell better.
- A mouthwash that reduces plaque and gum disease is a medicine. Other mouthwashes just make your breath smell better.
- Dandruff shampoos are drugs because they treat dandruff and itching. Regular shampoos only make your hair cleaner.
- Fluoride toothpastes are drugs because they reduce cavities. Toothpastes without fluoride are not drugs but they do help clean your teeth.

## Cough

There are two kinds of medicines that can help your cough. A cough suppressant helps you stop coughing or cough less often. An expectorant thins out mucus so you can cough it up more easily.

- **dextromethorphan** (dex-tro-meth-OR-fan)  
cough suppressant
- **guaifenesin** (gwi-FENNA-sin)  
expectorant

### Medicines with more than one active ingredient:

Some OTC medicines are made to treat more than one problem at a time. Examples of these medicines include:

- cold and flu medicines
- some allergy medicines
- cough and cold medicines.

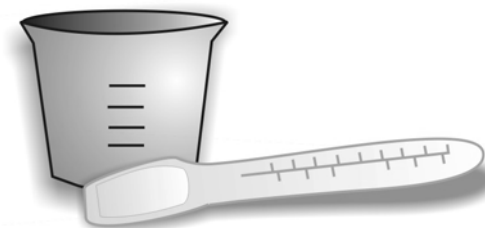
Some of these medicines have an ingredient to help ease pain or bring down a fever. Choose a medicine that treats only the problem you have. You don't want to take extra medicine for problems you don't have.

## How Much Is That? How to measure your medicine safely

It is important to measure your medicines correctly. If your medicine comes with a measuring spoon, cup, or syringe, then use it. This is the most exact way to measure your dose.

If your medicine does not have a special measuring tool, you can buy one at a pharmacy. A spoon from your kitchen may hold the wrong amount of medicine.

As you get older, you may choose to use medicines in a pill form (tablet, capsule) instead of a liquid form.



### Helpful hints for measuring liquid medicines:

Most medicines are measured in metric units like milligrams (mg), grams (g), or milliliters (ml).

5 mL = 1 teaspoon (tsp)  
15 mL = 1 tablespoon (3 teaspoons)  
30 mL = 1 fluid ounce (oz)



## Rules for Using Medicines Safely

### Do

1. Speak to your parent or guardian before using any medicine.
2. Read the *Drug Facts* panel on the label – ALL of it – and follow the directions.
3. Check ingredients.  
This is especially important if you are using more than one medicine. Make sure you are not using two medicines with the same active ingredient.
4. Choose a medicine that treats only the problems you have.
5. Tell your parent, guardian, or school nurse if you do not feel better or start to feel worse after using a medicine.
6. Tell your doctor or nurse ALL of the medicines you use. Include OTC medicines and vitamins.
7. Speak to your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist if you have questions about your medicine or how it should make you feel.
8. Keep all medicines in the bottle, box, or tube that they came in. That will make the directions easy to find.
9. Keep all medicines in a safe, dry place. Keep them where they can't be seen or reached by younger children or pets.

## Allergy and Cold

Antihistamines are active ingredients that treat these symptoms caused by an allergy or cold:

- Sneezing
- watery eyes
- runny nose
- Itchy throat nose and eyes

These OTC ingredients are antihistamines:

**diphenhydramine** (die-fen-HI-dra-meen)  
**chlorpheniramine** (klor-fen-EAR-a-meen)  
**clemastine** (kle-MASS-teen)  
**doxylamine** (dox-ILL-a-meen)  
**loratadine** (lor-AT-a-deen)

All of these ingredients, except loratadine, often cause sleepiness. It is hard to do school work or play sports and games when you are sleepy.

A person should not drive or use machines while using any of these medicines if the medicine makes them sleepy.

### Stuffy Nose (Nasal Congestion)

Allergies or a cold can give you a stuffy nose. These active ingredients treat stuffy nose and belong to a group of medicines called decongestants:

**pseudoephedrine** (su-do-e-FED-rin)  
**phenylephrine** (fen-nil-EF-rin)

People with high blood pressure, heart disease, or other health problems need to speak with their doctor or nurse before using these medicines.



## Common Active Ingredients in OTC Medicines

The active ingredients in a medicine make the medicine work. It is important to know what active ingredients are in your medicine before you use it.

### Fever and Pain

There are five active ingredients used to reduce fever and to treat mild aches and pains caused by headaches, muscle aches, back-aches, toothache, the common cold, and menstrual cramps.

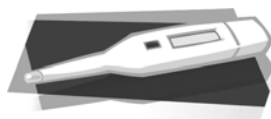
**acetaminophen** (a-see-ta-MIN-o-fin)

**ibuprofen** (i-bu-PRO-fen)

**naproxen sodium** (nah-PROX-en SO-dee-um)

**ketoprofen** (key-to-PRO-fen)

**aspirin** (AS-per-in)

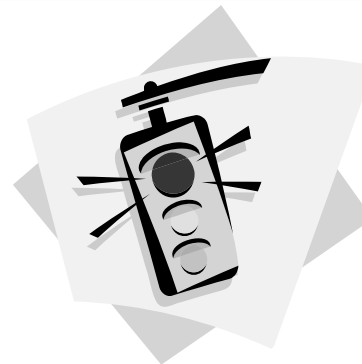


The last four active ingredients are all members of a drug family called non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, or NSAIDs for short. These medicines lower your body's fever, swelling, and pain, including menstrual cramps.

Children and teenagers should not take aspirin for fever or flu because it may cause a severe illness called Reye's Syndrome.

*The same OTC medicines that treat aches and pains also treat fever.*

## Rules for Using Medicines Safely:



### Don't

1. **Don't** use a medicine unless you know what it is and what it is for.
2. **Don't** use more medicine than the amount listed on the label. If your over-the-counter medicine does not help you feel better, tell your parents. Your parents may want to call your doctor or nurse.
3. **Don't** use other people's prescription medicine and do not share your prescription medicine with anyone else.
4. **Don't** take medicine for longer than the label says.
5. **Don't** use old medicines. If a medicine is past the expiration date on the package, throw it in a garbage can away from small children and pets. This is the best choice if your parents can not take it to a household hazardous waste site.

*Too much of a good thing, can be bad. Follow your Medicine's Drug Facts label carefully!*

# The *Drug Facts* Label

## The **Active ingredient/Purpose**

section tells you about the part of your medicine that makes it work, including its name, what it does, and how much is in each pill or teaspoon (5 mL).

The **Uses** section lists the problems the medicine will treat.

The **Warnings** section tells you:

- When you should talk to your doctor first
- How the medicine might make you feel
- When you should stop using the medicine
- When you shouldn't use the medicine at all
- About things you should not do while taking the medicine.

## **Drug Facts**

### **Active ingredient (in each tablet)**

Chlorpheniramine maleate 4 mg.....Antihistamine

### **Purpose**

**Uses** temporarily relieves these symptoms due to hay fever or other upper respiratory allergies: ■ sneezing ■ runny nose ■ itchy, watery eyes ■ itchy throat

### **Warnings**

**Ask a doctor before use if you have**

- glaucoma ■ a breathing problem such as emphysema or chronic bronchitis
- trouble urinating due to an enlarged prostate gland

**Ask a doctor or pharmacist before use if you are taking tranquilizers or sedatives**

**When using this product**

- you may get drowsy ■ avoid alcoholic drinks
- alcohol, sedatives, and tranquilizers may increase drowsiness
- be careful when driving a motor vehicle or operating machinery
- excitability may occur, especially in children

**If pregnant or breast-feeding**, ask a health professional before use.

**Keep out of reach of children.** In case of overdose, get medical help or contact a Poison Control Center right away.

### **Directions**

adults and children 12 years and over	take 1 tablet every 4 to 6 hours; not more than 6 tablets in 24 hours
children 6 years to under 12 years	take 1/2 tablet every 4 to 6 hours; not more than 3 tablets in 24 hours
children under 6 years	ask a doctor

**Other information** ■ store at 20-25°C (68-77°F) ■ protect from excessive moisture

**Inactive ingredients** D&C yellow no. 10, lactose, magnesium stearate, microcrystalline cellulose, pregelatinized starch

The **Warnings** section also tells you:

- To check with a doctor before using medicine if you are pregnant or breastfeeding.
- To keep medicines away from children

The **Directions** tell you how to safely use the medicine:

- How much to use
- How to use it
- How often to use it (how many times per day or how many hours apart)
- How long you can use it.

The **Other information** section tells you how to keep your medicine when you are not using it.

The **Inactive ingredients** are mixed with the active ingredient to: form a pill, add flavor or color, or help the medicine last longer.

